about the threat perceptions regarding activities of militant and terrorist groups in the country.

A Conference of Chief Secretaries and Directors General of Police was convened on 5th October, 2001 followed by a Conference of Chief Minister on 17th November, 2001 to sensitise them to threat perceptions and to ensure a coordinated response to internal security issues.

In the wake of the 11th September attacks in USA, the State Government/Union Territories have been advised to strengthen security around the vital installations. Review of VVIP security has been undertaken. Security of airports, aircraft etc. has been strengthened. The State Governments have been requested to gear up collection of intelligence with regard to sabotage, subversive activities and attempts to disturb communal harmony. The State Governments/UTs have also been requested to keep contingency plans in readiness to deal with any eventuality.

Prevention of Terrorism Ordinance, 2001 has been promulgated under which 23 organisations are listed as Terrorist Organisaitons.

Use of Biological Weapons

343. SHRI PREM CHAND GUPTA:
SHRI C.O. POULOSE:

Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the use of biological agents by terrorists has now become a reality, though its development and manufacture is banned under the Biological Warfare Convention (1972) and the earlier Geneva Protocol of 1925; and

(b) if so, what action does Government recommend to prevent this new type of threat to our society?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI CHENNAMANENI VIDYA SAGAR RAO:) (a) Yes Sir.

(b) The Government has issued a detailed circular to all States and

Union Territories containing a list of biological agents used as weapons, along with signs and symptoms, likely method of dissemination, incubation period, lethality and the availability of vaccines, anti-microbial therapy and treatment. They have been requested to earmark maximum number of beds for emergency/ contingency, stocking of vaccines/sera/drugs to the extent possible and setting up of special teams of doctors for coordinated action. It has also been requested that these teams should be sensitized on the impact of such weapons and treatment mesures.

A general awareness campaign regarding Anthrax has been launched by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.

In addition, all States/Union Territories have been sensitized to remain vigilant to the emerging threats to internal security and to have contingency plans in readiness to deal with any eventuality, including precautions against weapons of mass destruction.

Renting out licenced arms to criminals

344. SHRI BHAGATRAM MANHAR:
SHRI RAJU PARMAR:

Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that licened arms and ammunitions are being rented out to hardcore criminals and organised gangs in their nefarious designs in Uttar Pradesh particularly on Indo-Nepal border;

(b) if so, how many such cases have been reported so far; and

(c) what steps Government has taken or propose to take to arrest the members of the organised gangs?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI I.D. SWAMI:) (a) to (c) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.